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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4817
INFO RUEHZH/HAITI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY 1307
RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA PRIORITY 1142
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RUMIAAA/HQ USSOUTHCOM J2 MIAMI FL PRIORITY
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 PORT AU PRINCE 002306

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STATE FOR WHA/EX AND WHA/CAR
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SOUTHCOMALSO FOR POLAD
STATE PASS AID FOR LAC/CAR
INR/IAA (BEN-YEHUDA)
WHA/EX PLEASE PASS USOAS

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: ELECTIONS TAKE PLACE IN RELATIVE CALM

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11. (U) Summary: Voting for municipal and local candidates proceeded smoothly with a few hiccups. Political party observers outnumbered the electorate in many voting centers and a small number of voters were turned away from the polling stations because their names did not appear on the voter registration lists. However, Embassy officers reported relative organization at the voting centers, sufficient police presence, and quick resolution to potential problems with voter turnout seemingly lower than the second round. End Summary.

More Observers than Voters

12. (U) Embassy officers in Port-au-Prince, the North, South, and Artibonite Departments reported that most voting centers opened on time or with a minor delay this morning and were fully staffed with poll workers and electoral security. Despite readiness and overall good organization, voter turnout was low with a constant trickle of voters throughout the day. The impoverished neighborhood of Carrefour is a notable exception; however, with approximately 150 people waiting in line and heavy police presence during the morning. All eight election observation teams reported two similar problems: too many political party observers and confusion over voter registration lists.

13. (U) At opening time, many of the polling stations were inundated by political party observers. Radio Kiskeya reported that the CEP had registered too many observers for each of the centers. As many as 12 observers for each political party were present at the polling stations. In most instances, center managers resolved the issue without incident. Some observers were asked to rotate on an hourly basis, others were asked to select a representative from each group because the size of the stations would not accommodate all of the observers. By mid-day, a conoff reported that most of the polling stations were crammed full of political party observers picking childish fights because they had no voters to observe.⁸

14. (U) There was also some confusion over where some electors should vote. In all areas where embassy officers visited

voting centers, a few would-be voters were turned away because their names did not appear on the voting lists. According to the voters, they were able to vote in the previous rounds even when their names did not appear on the list; however, now, a voter's name must be on the electoral list in order to cast his vote. This has caused some frustration on the part of the voters. (Note: While it is true that in the previous two rounds voters were accommodated at almost any polling station, this is not the case with the local and municipal elections because residency of the voter influences the ballot they will receive. End Note.)

Proactive Problem Solving

15. (U) In Gonaives, three poll workers observed a fourth poll worker give 6 ballots to one elector. The manager suspended the poll worker's duties. In Port-au-Prince, two political party observers presented falsified documents and were apprehended by the HNP at the request of the manager. In Furcy, southwest of Port-au-Prince, the voting center manager replaced 30 of the 48 poll workers at the last minute. The Communal Electoral Bureau (BEC) president arrived, resolved the situation, and the original 48 workers went to work. In the Northeast department, the Alyans and Fusion candidates alleged that the local election officials represented a conflict of interest because of family ties with some candidates. The CEP representative intervened and reshuffled the officials so that any ties that may have existed would not impact the election process.

Security

16. (U) Embassy election observers reported that MINUSTAH, the HNP, and electoral security were present at the majority of the voting centers. The HNP were helpful in managing the

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political party observers, resolving problems with electors who became physically threatening when turned away by poll workers and with candidates loitering unnecessarily around the voting centers.

17. (U) Morning radio reports stated that gang related shooting was heard in the district of Martissant throughout the night and continued throughout the morning on election day. Although the gun violence was not election related, it likely affected voter turnout.

Local Politics Turn Nasty

18. (U) Poloff spoke to an L'Artibonite in Action (LAAA) mayoral candidate in Gonaives who had been shot in the stomach the evening before elections by a Lespwa candidate. The LAAA candidate admitted that the two men had an ongoing rivalry that pre-dated their candidacies.

19. (U) In Mapou, a small southern city outside of Jacmel, the HNP were forced to close the polling station. (Note: MINUSTAH indicated that about 30 voting centers were closed around the country, some temporarily, throughout the day. End Note.) In this hotly contested election with a constituency of approximately 4,000, Lespwa and OPL supporters physically assaulted the other supporters and then attacked the polling station. The two HNP and two UNPOL officers present were unable to control the crowd and the supporters destroyed the polling station and the ballots. MINUSTAH was called in but upon their arrival, tensions had quelled and the crowd dispersed.

110. (U) Comment: Today's elections proceeded with very low voter turnout. No widespread incidents occurred although press reporting indicates a higher level of disruptive occurrences took place in the provinces than in

Port-au-Prince; widespread irregularities were not present.

End Comment.

SANDERSON